JUNGLE ACTION
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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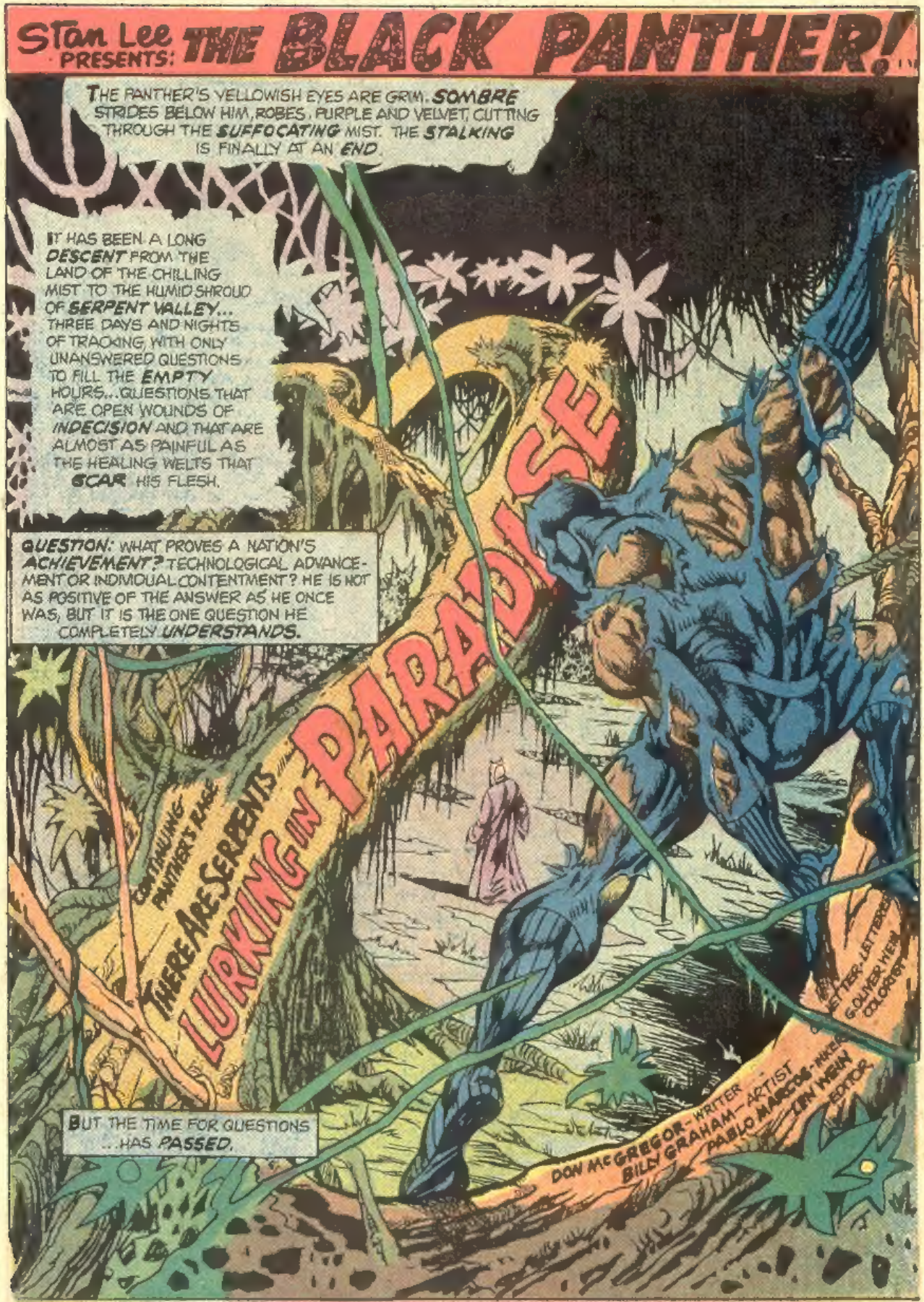
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
SEE T'CHALLA BATTLE AS NEVER BEFORE AGAINST THE BEHEMOTHS FROM BEYOND TIME!
THERE ARE SERPENTS IN PARADISE
AND THEY'RE NOT JUST YOUR EVERYDAY GARTER SNAKES!


Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!
THE PANTHER'S YELLOWISH EYES ARE GRIM. SOMBRE STRIDES BELOW HIM, ROBES, PURPLE AND VELVET, CUTTING THROUGH THE SUFFOCATING MIST. THE STALKING IS FINALLY AT AN END.
IT HAS BEEN A LONG DESCENT FROM THE LAND OF THE CHILLING MIST TO THE HUMID SHROUD OF SERPENT VALLEY... THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS OF TRACKING, WITH ONLY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS TO FILL THE EMPTY HOURS...QUESTIONS THAT ARE OPEN WOUNDS OF INDECISION AND THAT ARE ALMOST AS PAINFUL AS THE HEALING WELTS THAT SCAR HIS FLESH.
QUESTION: WHAT PROVES A NATION'S ACHIEVEMENT? TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT OR INDIVIDUAL CONTENTMENT? HE IS NOT AS POSITIVE OF THE ANSWER AS HE ONCE WAS, BUT IT IS THE ONE QUESTION HE COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDS.
CONTINUING PANTHER'S RAGE
THERE ARE SERPENTS—
LURKING IN PARADISE
BUT THE TIME FOR QUESTIONS ...HAS PASSED.
DON McGREGOR—WRITER
BILLY GRAHAM—ARTIST
PABLO MARCOS—INKER
LETTER: JOHN COSTANZA
COLORIST: GLYNIS WEIN
LEN WEIN EDITOR

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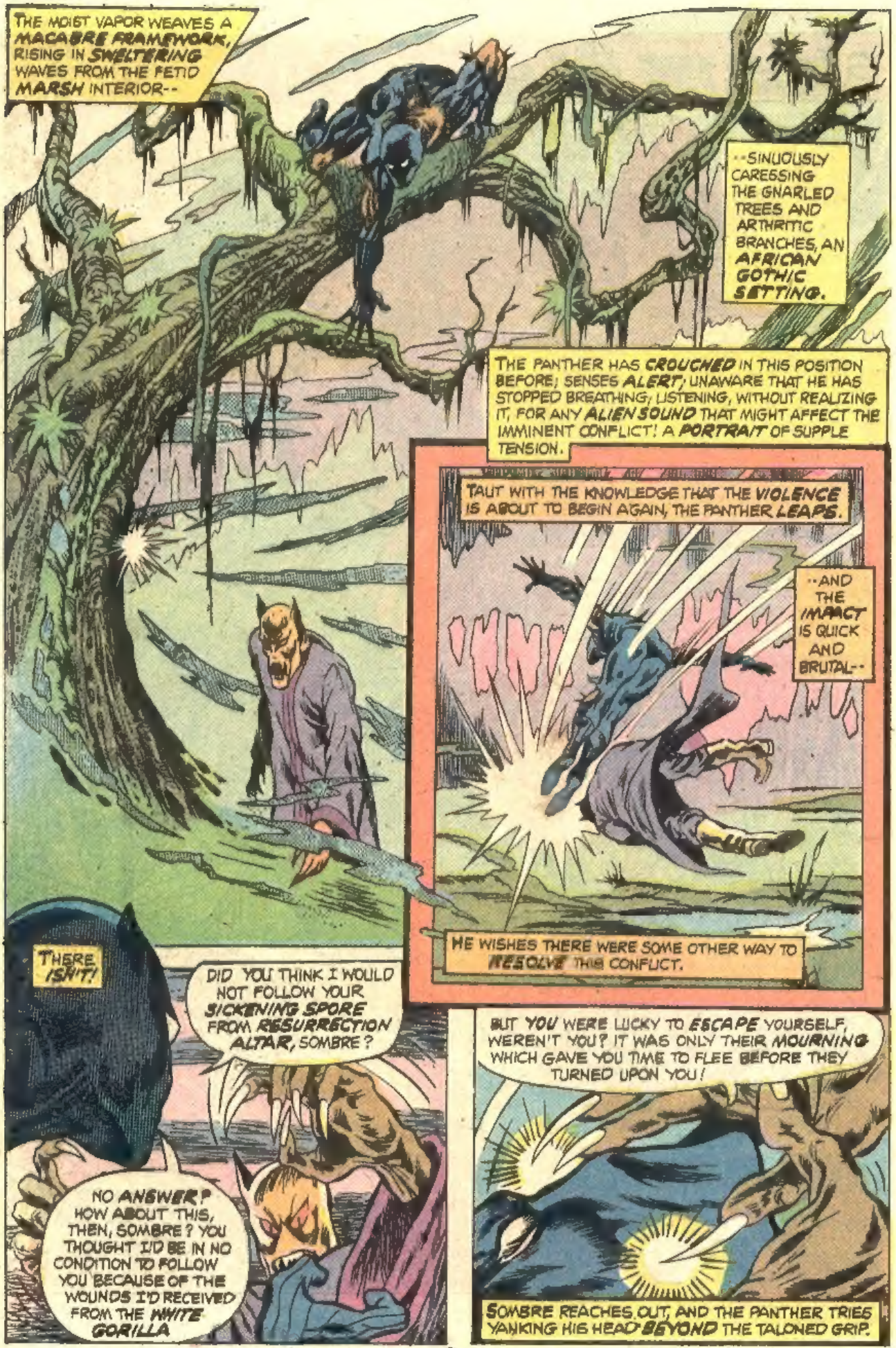
THE MOIST VAPOR WEAVES A MACABRE FRAMEWORK, RISING IN SWELTERING WAVES FROM THE FETID MARSH INTERIOR--
--SINUOUSLY CARESSING THE GNARLED TREES AND ARTHRITIC BRANCHES, AN AFRICAN GOTHIC SETTING.
THE PANTHER HAS CROUCHED IN THIS POSITION BEFORE; SENSES ALERT; UNAWARE THAT HE HAS STOPPED BREATHING; LISTENING, WITHOUT REALIZING IT, FOR ANY ALIEN SOUND THAT MIGHT AFFECT THE IMMINENT CONFLICT! A PORTRAIT OF SUPPLE TENSION.
TAUT WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE VIOLENCE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN AGAIN, THE PANTHER LEAPS.
--AND THE IMPACT IS QUICK AND BRUTAL--
HE WISHES THERE WERE SOME OTHER WAY TO RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT.
THERE ISN'T!
DID YOU THINK I WOULD NOT FOLLOW YOUR SICKENING SPORE FROM RESURRECTION ALTAR, SOMBRE?
NO ANSWER? HOW ABOUT THIS, THEN, SOMBRE? YOU THOUGHT I'D BE IN NO CONDITION TO FOLLOW YOU BECAUSE OF THE WOUNDS I'D RECEIVED FROM THE WHITE GORILLA
BUT YOU WERE LUCKY TO ESCAPE YOURSELF, WEREN'T YOU? IT WAS ONLY THEIR MOURNING WHICH GAVE YOU TIME TO FLEE BEFORE THEY TURNED UPON YOU!
SOMBRE REACHES OUT, AND THE PANTHER TRIES YANKING HIS HEAD BEYOND THE TALONED GRIP.

--BUT FAILS!
--BURNING THE SOFT TISSUE OF THE PANTHER'S THROAT!
FINGERS, BLISTERED AND TALONED, TIGHTEN ABOUT HIS THROAT, AND THE TOUCH OF THAT MOULDERING FLESH IS ACRIDIC--
SWEAT DRIPS INTO THE PANTHER'S EYES, MOMENTARILY BLINDING HIM!
DON'T PANIC!
DON'T PANIC! SOME DISTANT MIND-ECHO CRIES WHILE HE LUNGES UPWARD INTO SOMBRE'S CHEST CAVITY.
THERE IS HARDLY ANY RESISTANCE, AS IF BENEATH THE ROBES, SOMBRE IS THE CONSISTENCY OF DAMP CORPSE-ASH!
A MOAN ESCAPES THE PANTHER'S LIPS, THE BLACK CAT RELUCTANTLY GIVING VOICE TO ITS PAIN--
--FOR THE TORN FLESH WHICH HAS BEEN HEALING TEARS APART--
--AGONIZINGLY!
KILLING A WHITE GORILLA SHOULD HAVE BEEN TANTAMOUNT TO KILLING A RELIGIOUS BELIEF.
BUT YOU HAVE NO TIME LEFT FOR THEOLOGICAL CRISES, PANTHER.
YOU SHOULD HAVE RETURNED TO THE SAFETY OF CENTRAL WAKANDA WHILE YOU HAD THE CHANCE--
WHERE YOUR LOVED ONES COULD HAVE CONVINCED YOU OF YOUR WORTH.
INSTEAD, YOU WILL DIE HERE, PANTHER--
--AND NONE OF YOUR FOLLOWERS WILL EVER FIND YOUR REMAINS!
SOMBRE DOES NOT HAVE TO SUCK BLOOD WITH ANY VAMPIRIC COMPULSION. HE IS NOT A VAMPIRE IN THE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE WORD.
HE HAS MERELY THE ABILITY TO DRINK BLOOD, HIS HUMANITY REDUCED TO CINDERS BENEATH THE VIBRANT RAYS OF HIS SHRINE.. RESURECTION ALTAR.



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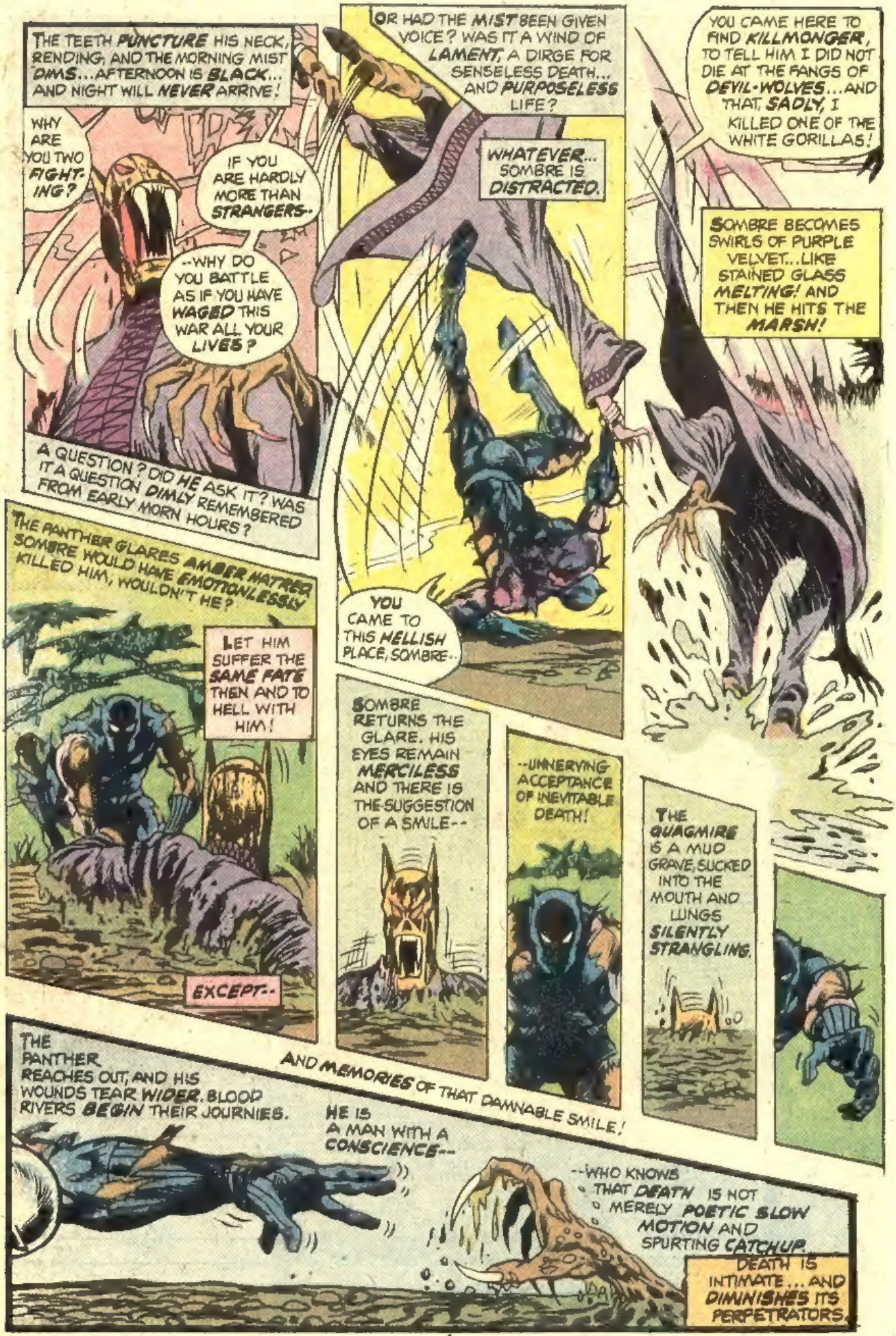
THE TEETH PUNCTURE HIS NECK, RENDING; AND THE MORNING MIST DIMS... AFTERNOON IS BLACK... AND NIGHT WILL NEVER ARRIVE!
WHY ARE YOU TWO FIGHTING?
IF YOU ARE HARDLY MORE THAN STRANGERS--
--WHY DO YOU BATTLE AS IF YOU HAVE WAGED THIS WAR ALL YOUR LIVES?
A QUESTION? DID HE ASK IT? WAS IT A QUESTION DIMLY REMEMBERED FROM EARLY MORN HOURS?
OR HAD THE MIST BEEN GIVEN VOICE? WAS IT A WIND OF LAMENT, A DIRGE FOR SENSELESS DEATH... AND PURPOSELESS LIFE?
WHATEVER... SOMBRE IS DISTRACTED.
YOU CAME TO THIS HELLISH PLACE, SOMBRE--
YOU CAME HERE TO FIND KILLMONGER, TO TELL HIM I DID NOT DIE AT THE FANGS OF DEVIL-WOLVES... AND THAT, SADLY, I KILLED ONE OF THE WHITE GORILLAS!
SOMBRE BECOMES SWIRLS OF PURPLE VELVET... LIKE STAINED GLASS MELTING! AND THEN HE HITS THE MARSH!
THE PANTHER GLARES AMBER HATRED. SOMBRE WOULD HAVE EMOTIONLESSLY KILLED HIM, WOULDN'T HE?
LET HIM SUFFER THE SAME FATE THEN AND TO HELL WITH HIM!
EXCEPT--
SOMBRE RETURNS THE GLARE. HIS EYES REMAIN MERCILESS AND THERE IS THE SUGGESTION OF A SMILE--
--UNNERVING ACCEPTANCE OF INEVITABLE DEATH!
THE QUAGMIRE IS A MUD GRAVE, SUCKED INTO THE MOUTH AND LUNGS SILENTLY STRANGLING.
AND MEMORIES OF THAT DAMNABLE SMILE!
THE PANTHER REACHES OUT, AND HIS WOUNDS TEAR WIDER. BLOOD RIVERS BEGIN THEIR JOURNIES.
HE IS A MAN WITH A CONSCIENCE--
--WHO KNOWS THAT DEATH IS NOT MERELY POETIC SLOW MOTION AND SPURTING CATCHUP.
DEATH IS INTIMATE... AND DIMINISHES ITS PERPETRATORS.

QUIETUDE.
AS IF THE MORNING HAD NEVER BEEN BROKEN BY COMBAT, AS IF DEATH HAD NOT —TAKEN PLACE.
THE MARSHLAND STRETCHES DESOLATELY. THE MOMENT WILL LIVE ONLY IN HIS THOUGHTS.
THE QUIET REMAINS, UNBROKEN, BUT HE PAUSES, THERE IS THE FAINT SCENT OF SOMETHING UNDEFINED.
--PERHAPS IMAGINED.
AND THEN HE REMEMBERS THE VOICE.
THERE HAD BEEN A VOICE, HADN'T THERE? BACK WHEN THE AFTERNOON WAS TURNING BLACK AND HIS WOUNDS DRIPPED BLOOD ANEW.
OR WAS THAT PART OF HIS IMAGINATION ALSO.
HE SPRINGS, HALF SNARLING, THE CAUTIOUS CAT SEEKING THE UNSEEN.
DOES THIS MAN'S DEATH MEAN YOU HAVE WON, INTRUDER?
DOES THIS MEAN YOU WILL TAKE YOUR INSANITY AND LEAVE SERPENT VALLEY?
THE VOICE IS LIGHT AND MERRY. IT DOES NOT BELONG IN THIS PLACE...AND ITS TONE IS A PARADOX.
HE GLIMPSES THE FIGURE, VAGUELY, PERCHED HIGH IN THE NETWORK OF CHOKING VINE AND MIST... AND GRACEFULLY HE PROPELS HIMSELF UPWARD!
WHO ARE YOU? ONE OF KILLMONGER'S SENTRIES?
KILLMONGER? IS THAT ANOTHER MAN YOU WISH TO FIGHT?
AND WHAT END WILL THERE BE THIS TIME?



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SOMETIMES I THINK THERE WILL BE NO END TO IT!
THE HIGH PITCHED VOICE IS WITHOUT ANIMOSITY, AN INQUIRY PLEASANTLY PUT INTO VOCAL TERMS, SOUNDING ALMOST--
--ALMOST... THE PANTHER REJECTS THE TERM, LEAPING UNERRINGLY AT THE FURTIVE FIGURE-
--ALMOST... HE RELENTS, HANDS ABOUT TO CLUTCH HIS TARGET, ALMOST PIXIE-ISH, REMINISCENT OF SAGE PYGMIS OR CAREFREE ELVES OR WOODLAND NYMPHS.
NYMPHS?
THE PANTHER NEARLY LAUGHS ALOUD. IT IS A GOOD THING TAYETE AND KAZIBE AREN'T HERE TO SEE THIS. MONICA WOULD LAUGH, BUT IT WOULD BE GAIETY AND HER TOUCH WOULD BE SOOTHING--
THAT TERM HE FIRMLY REJECTS. NYMPHS ARE TINY, PERFECTLY SCULPTURED FEMALES ...CARTOONISTS' DELIGHTS... AND THIS FIGURE IS ANYTHING BUT THAT.
--AND MISSES!
FLUIDLY, HE BRUSHES PAST THE LAST CLINGING MOSS, GAUGING DISTANCE AND SPEED--
--ENOUGH TO MAKE A MAN WHOLE!
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ME?
HOW DID YOU DO THAT?
WHERE ARE YOU?
DOES IT MATTER?
I ASK AGAIN. WHO ARE YOU?
WOULD A NAME MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU? WOULD IT GIVE YOU AN IDENTITY TO FIGHT?
I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU. I'M AFTER KILLMONGER. I WANT TO KNOW WHY HE'S ENTERED THIS TREACHEROUS TERRAIN.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE KILLMONGER IS?
CAN'T YOU PICK UP HIS SCENT?

HE HAS PASSED BY HERE--
--AND HE WASN'T ALONE! YOU'RE RIGHT, WHO-EVER YOU ARE!
MOKADI.
WHO...OR WHAT...ARE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO BE?
DO YOU COME FROM HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHY THIS PLACE IS CALLED SERPENT VALLEY?
WHY DO YOU THINK IT HAS SUCH A NAME?
ARE THERE SERPENTS HERE?
WHO ARE THE SERPENTS? AND HOW MANY BREEDS OF SERPENTS ARE THERE?
YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS WITH QUESTIONS.
I HAVE NO ANSWERS. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO MOVES AND ACTS AS IF HE HAS ALL THE ANSWERS.
HE DOESN'T!
AND WHAT ARE YOU, MOKADI? THE EMBODIMENT OF A JUDGE AND JURY?
DON'T YOU KNOW WHY?
AND WHY DO YOU FOLLOW ME?
NO. BUT I KNOW KILL-MONGER AND HIS MEN ARE CLOSE AT HAND--
--AND I REMEMBER INNOCENTS SLAUGHTERED TO FURTHER HIS ATTACK IN GAINING THE THRONE OF CENTRAL WAKANDA!
OR ARE YOU EVEN AWARE THERE IS A LAND BEYOND THE MIST THAT HOVERS OVER YOUR VALLEY?
AND IF I WAS, WHAT WOULD I SEE?
A BEAUTIFUL LAND.
SUNSETS AND DAWNS. EXQUISITE GARDENS AND SUPERBLY CRAFTED PALACES AND HOMES AND SHRINES.
AND WHAT DO THEY STAND FOR? MORE THAN THESE TREES?
MORE THAN THIS RIVER...WHICH ONCE RAN FREE AND CLEAR AND NOW CHOKES ON THE MISERIES YOU AND THIS KILLMONGER HAVE BROUGHT WITH YOU.
THE SCENT OF OIL IS OVERPOWERING, SPREADING BLACK, LEPROUS FINGERS. THE RIVER STRUGGLES TO CONTINUE ITS AGELESS FLOW--
THE STRUGGLE HAS BEEN LOST!



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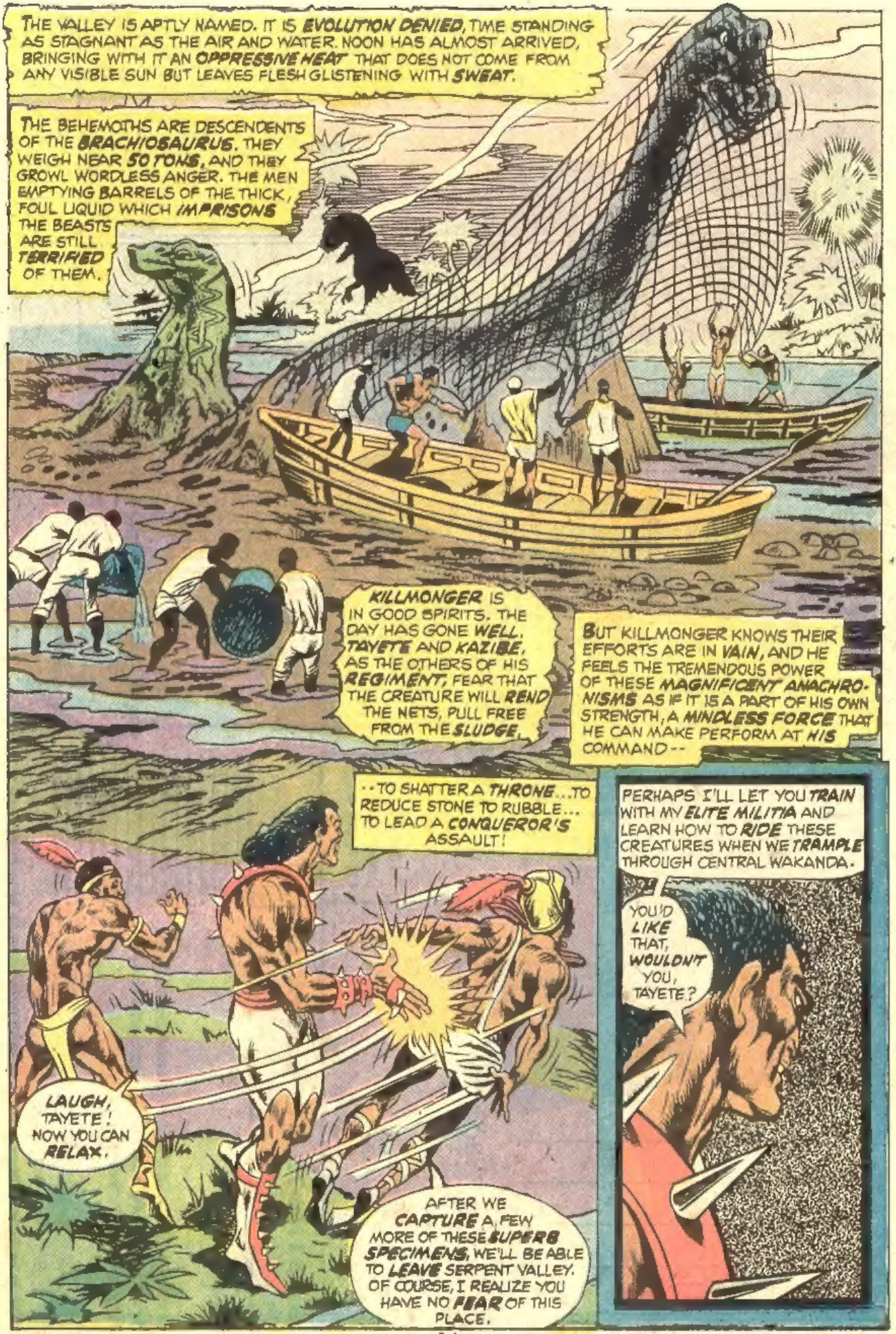
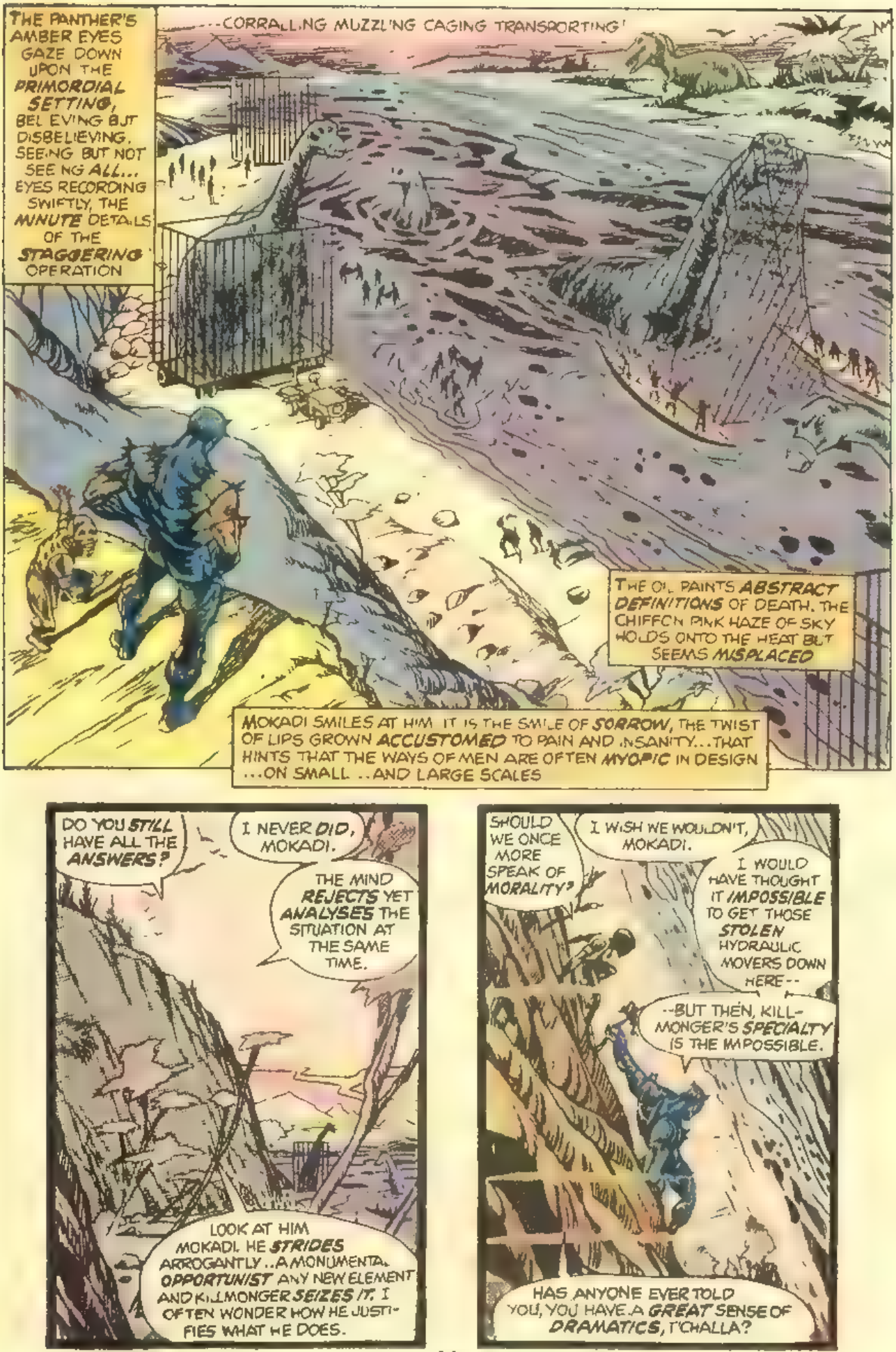
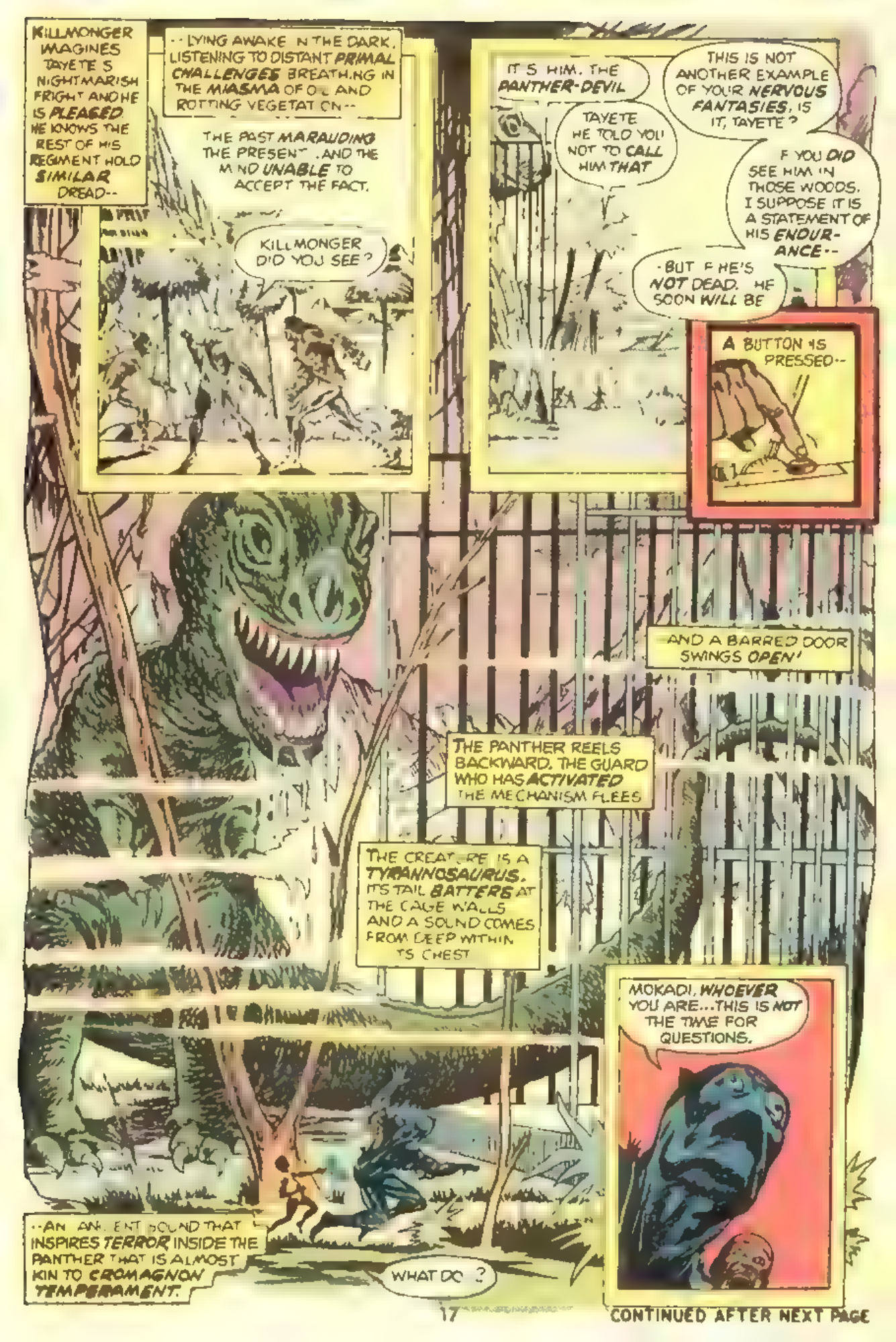

THE VALLEY IS APTLY NAMED. IT IS EVOLUTION DENIED, TIME STANDING AS STAGNANT AS THE AIR AND WATER. NOON HAS ALMOST ARRIVED, BRINGING WITH IT AN OPPRESSIVE HEAT THAT DOES NOT COME FROM ANY VISIBLE SUN BUT LEAVES FLESH GLISTENING WITH SWEAT.
THE BEHEMOTHS ARE DESCENDENTS OF THE BRACHIOSAURUS. THEY WEIGH NEAR 50 TONS, AND THEY GROWL WORDLESS ANGER. THE MEN EMPTYING BARRELS OF THE THICK, FOUL LIQUID WHICH IMPRISONS THE BEASTS ARE STILL TERRIFIED OF THEM.
KILLMONGER IS IN GOOD SPIRITS. THE DAY HAS GONE WELL. TAYETE AND KAZIBE, AS THE OTHERS OF HIS REGIMENT, FEAR THAT THE CREATURE WILL REND THE NETS, PULL FREE FROM THE SLUDGE,
BUT KILLMONGER KNOWS THEIR EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN, AND HE FEELS THE TREMENDOUS POWER OF THESE MAGNIFICENT ANACHRONISMS AS IF IT IS A PART OF HIS OWN STRENGTH, A MINDLESS FORCE THAT HE CAN MAKE PERFORM AT HIS COMMAND--
--TO SHATTER A THRONE...TO REDUCE STONE TO RUBBLE... TO LEAD A CONQUEROR'S ASSAULT!
PERHAPS I'LL LET YOU TRAIN WITH MY ELITE MILITIA AND LEARN HOW TO RIDE THESE CREATURES WHEN WE TRAMPLE THROUGH CENTRAL WAKANDA.
YOU'D LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T YOU, TAYETE?
LAUGH, TAYETE! NOW YOU CAN RELAX.
AFTER WE CAPTURE A FEW MORE OF THESE SUPERB SPECIMENS, WE'LL BE ABLE TO LEAVE SERPENT VALLEY. OF COURSE, I REALIZE YOU HAVE NO FEAR OF THIS PLACE.

COME, TAYETE. YOUR BALANCE SHOULD BE BETTER THAN THAT.
KILL...KILLMONGER?
YES, KAZIBE?
SPEAK QUICKLY... AND I HOPE YOU HAVE LEARNED YOUR LESSON--
UH...KI... KILLMONGER,
--FOR LEADING T'CHALLA TO THE LAND OF THE CHILLING MIST COULD HAVE LED HIM HERE. NOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE CHANGED ANYTHING.
UH...KILLMONGER?
YES, KAZIBE? WHAT IS IT? HURRY BEFORE YOU TRY MY PATIENCE.
I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT..
--BUT DON'T YOU THINK TAYETE COULD..UH ...DROWN IN THAT STUFF?
THERE'S NOT A CHANCE OF THAT, KAZIBE. TAYETE IS JUST ANXIOUS TO JOIN THE OTHERS.
THAT'S RIGHT, ISN'T IT, TAYETE?
SU...SURE.
I THINK.
FRAIL FIGURES MERGED IN... TRAGEDIES.
THE GRACEFUL WINGS FLUTTER. WEAK BIRD-TRILLING SEEMS TO ASK WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE GIFT OF FLIGHT.
HANDS REACHING.--
ONE HAND REACHING FIRST.
THE BIRD DOES NOT HAVE SENTIENT THOUGHT, BUT ITS EYES ARE NEARLY HUMAN. THEY BLEED WITH PANIC.
TAYETE, IF WE LOST TIME SAVING EACH HELPLESS STRAY ON OUR ROAD TO GREATNESS--
IT MAKES THE SAME QUINTESSENTIAL, TRAGIC EFFORTS AS THE BEHEMOTHS,
BUT ITS PLAINTIVE DEATH-CRIES ARE LOST IN THE VASTNESS OF EVENTS.
--WE WOULD NEVER REACH OUR DESTINATION.
AS USUAL!


THE PANTHER'S AMBER EYES GAZE DOWN UPON THE PRIMORDIAL SETTING, BELIEVING BUT DISBELIEVING. SEEING BUT NOT SEEING ALL... EYES RECORDING SWIFTLY, THE MINUTE DETAILS OF THE STAGGERING OPERATION
---CORRALLING MUZZLING CAGING TRANSPORTING!
THE OIL PAINTS ABSTRACT DEFINITIONS OF DEATH. THE CHIFFON PINK HAZE OF SKY HOLDS ONTO THE HEAT BUT SEEMS MISPLACED
MOKADI SMILES AT HIM. IT IS THE SMILE OF SORROW, THE TWIST OF LIPS GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO PAIN AND INSANITY...THAT HINTS THAT THE WAYS OF MEN ARE OFTEN MYOPIC IN DESIGN ...ON SMALL ..AND LARGE SCALES
DO YOU STILL HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS?
I NEVER DID, MOKADI.
THE MIND REJECTS YET ANALYSES THE SITUATION AT THE SAME TIME.
LOOK AT HIM MOKADI. HE STRIDES ARROGANTLY ..A MONUMENTAL OPPORTUNIST ANY NEW ELEMENT AND KILLMONGER SEIZES IT. I OFTEN WONDER HOW HE JUSTIFIES WHAT HE DOES.
SHOULD WE ONCE MORE SPEAK OF MORALITY?
I WISH WE WOULDN'T, MOKADI.
I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THOSE STOLEN HYDRAULIC MOVERS DOWN HERE--
--BUT THEN, KILLMONGER'S SPECIALTY IS THE IMPOSSIBLE.
HAS ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU, YOU HAVE A GREAT SENSE OF DRAMATICS, T'CHALLA?


KILLMONGER IMAGINES TAYETE'S NIGHTMARISH FRIGHT AND HE IS PLEASED. HE KNOWS THE REST OF HIS REGIMENT HOLD SIMILAR DREAD--
--LYING AWAKE IN THE DARK, LISTENING TO DISTANT PRIMAL CHALLENGES BREATHING IN THE MIASMA OF OIL AND ROTTING VEGETATION--
THE PAST MARAUDING THE PRESENT...AND THE MIND UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE FACT.
KILLMONGER DID YOU SEE?
IT'S HIM. THE PANTHER-DEVIL
TAYETE HE TOLD YOU NOT TO CALL HIM THAT
THIS IS NOT ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF YOUR NERVOUS FANTASIES, IS IT, TAYETE?
IF YOU DID SEE HIM IN THOSE WOODS, I SUPPOSE IT IS A STATEMENT OF HIS ENDURANCE--
BUT IF HE'S NOT DEAD, HE SOON WILL BE
A BUTTON IS PRESSED--
AND A BARRED DOOR SWINGS OPEN!
THE PANTHER REELS BACKWARD. THE GUARD WHO HAS ACTIVATED THE MECHANISM FLEES
THE CREATURE IS A TYRANNOSAURUS. ITS TAIL BATTERS AT THE CAGE WALLS AND A SOUND COMES FROM DEEP WITHIN ITS CHEST
MOKADI, WHOEVER YOU ARE...THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR QUESTIONS.
--AN ANCIENT SOUND THAT INSPIRES TERROR INSIDE THE PANTHER THAT IS ALMOST KIN TO CROMAGNON TEMPERAMENT.
WHAT DO?



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# JUNGLE RE-ACTIONS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE NYC 10022

**SPECIAL BULLETIN FROM THE WAKANDA CON!**

**No, we don't have any further news to report on Lorna and her pet mongoose, those stalwarts who have been waiting in the wings to fill our back up features pages. And there they shall wait for awhile longer, maybe quite awhile longer if all things go well, as we've finally managed to get the Panther's adventures up to a full book.**

**We'd like to thank you, because it was, in part, your support, your response that helped influence the decision to get those extra pages. See, you *can* change things Thanks, People.**

**And now, let's get into those incisive missives on JUNGLE ACTION #12!**

Dear Don,

It's always a thought provoking pleasure to read another issue of JUNGLE ACTION featuring the McGregor Hero—what's that? The character's name is the Black Panther? Well, yes, that's true, on one level I like JUNGLE ACTION, featuring the Black Panther, too

Don, you are the only comic writer I know of who can write consistently and clearly on two levels at the same time. It was particularly evident in this issue you were not only writing the Panther's exploits, you were writing *about* them, at the same time While the stories are tightly plotted, spectacularly drawn (kudos once more to Billy and Klaus, and excitingly unexpected (who would have imagined that T'Challa would lose his tussle with Killmonger? Bravo!), there is a level on which the Black Panther is Don McGregor's vehicle for asking questions and posing problems about the whole concept of a hero.

Wakanda, as we have seen is a complex place, with real turbulences and that unrest which always categorizes a vital community It is a place where whumping the bad guys is not enough How does a super-hero overcome such powers as isolationism, mistrust, cultural chauvinism, uncertainty, and despair? These are the foes which the Panther, as the McGregor Hero, has faced, every bit as much as he has fought Killmonger, Venomm, Malice, Baron Macabre, King Cadaver, Lord Karnaj, and Sombre. Colorful and dynamic as the latter foes are (and they make for good solid comic book reading), I appreciate more the Panther's struggles against the first set, since we're in that very same fight.

Issue # 12 was not just the issue in which you, Don, Billy, and Klaus gave us "the senses-shattering ORIGIN of King Cadaver! The stupefying SECRET of Erik Killmonger!" or "this is IT! SHOWDOWN between T'Challa and KILLMONGER! Don't MISS IT!", although it had all that in it. Just as the bridge disappeared into the mist without sign of the other side, this was the Panther's battle with *despair*. What do we do when hope goes away? When they are realized as illusion, those broken dreams? How do you *keep* from despairing? T'Challa fought against Killmonger, and lost But that was not what the story was all about T'Challa fought against despair, and won

Don, your stories are not easy to read (although neither are they incoherent), nor are they free from some occasional bombastic excess. Your stories are thought over meticulously, and done with such vigor and honesty that they don't seem artificial Plus, they have a thing which comics rarely have, even the best of them meaning.

Oh, but there ain't no such thing as a "piece of burn't-out star" Don. Nor "quasar-like rays" neither. A writer you is. A physicist you isn't.

I'll say one thing the Black Panther is the hardest strip to write letters about of any comic strip extant. The letters have a tendency to degenerate into "yeah, right! I really dug was fantastic!, kudos to blew my mind ,finest scene I ever keep Billy Klaus, Don on how do you guys well, until Make Mine Marvel!"

Well, you get the idea. Thanks and keep up the good work

PETER B GILLIS
18 Bayberry Road, Elmsford, NY 10523

**Talk about incisive comments.**

**You're certainly right. There ain't no such thing as a quasar-like ray, Pete, and Don McGregor is about as far away from being a physicist as anyone is ever likely to get Actually, Don had done some research into the area but misinterpreted some of the data he had read and realized his mistake just after the book had gone to press**

**You should see the mistakes we catch *before* they go to press. Don tried to correct that incorrectly worded passage in JUNGLE ACTION #13 (you'll probably find some fault with it because he's still a long, looooong way from becoming a physicist) and promptly forgot to add a "Panther's Rage Continues" to the splash page**

**His screams have yet to fade**

**We'll be waiting for Marveldom at Large to give their senses shattering reaction to Mokadi. Is any reaction at Marvel anything less than senses-shattering? We're not sure if we asked that question or if that was Mokadi adding his subtle inquiries.**

Dear Roy, Don, Billy and Klaus

The Black Panther in JUNGLE ACTION is one of the brightest stars in the comic constellation Rarely, if ever, has an entire society been so-completely and adeptly fabricated in the history of the four-color comic Rarely, if ever, does each issue of a comic have within it a philosophical theme which does not get in the way of the plot, but rather, augments it. Rarely, if ever, is the small-scale epic handled well in comics And rarest of all is the series which does all of these well, and remains exciting. The Panther series is that series.

I think, however, that the strip can carry another three pages, and that Messrs. McGregor and Graham are capable. So how about it, guys?

Keep it up, and you will demonstrate, as is shown so rarely, that comics and intelligence are not mutually exclusive.

Roger Klorese
2739 East 65th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11234

**Comics and intelligence, as you've noted, are not mutually exclusive, nor need they be. We may not always achieve such lofty pinnacles, but there are many creative people experimenting and designing new and stimulating ways to entertain you, to banish the stigma that has been attached to comics for such a long time.**

**We all have one thing in common and that is our love for comics, and that, if anything, will be the one element that will keep comics alive and healthy in the coming years.**

**NEXT ISSUE. "THORNS IN THE FLESH, THORNS IN THE MIND!" The Panther starts back toward Central Wakanda and a new costume, but not before he meets a new villain, a newer threat, and ends up in the most devastating trap ever designed for a super-hero...one he may not escape from...at least not alive. You'll want to travel with T'Challa as he enters...The Forest of Thorns! And it may be a one way trip, Folks.**

**Hang in there!**

CENTRAL WAKANDA SEEMS TO BE HOLDING ITS BREATH ..WAITING TRANQUILITY TEMPLE: BLOSSOMS A DREAMER CAN TOUCH, FOUNTAINS TO GENTLY KEEP THE SILENCE FROM BECOMING OPPRESSIVE TOUCH THE SOFT PETAL. CRUSHED RED. T DOESN'T DRIP BLOOD, DOES IT? BRUSH THE BLUE LEAVES. THEY DO NOT WEEP.

TRANQUILITY TEMPLE: A FANTASY CONSTRUCTED INTO ARCHITECTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL REALITY.

T'CHALLA IS GONE NOW. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN BACK. BUT HE ISN'T, AND HE HAS LEFT ME IN CHARGE...TO KEEP CONTROL OF THE PRISONERS CAPTURED IN THE RAID ON KILLMONGER'S VILLAGE.

AND NOW, YOUR MOTHER AND I, LIVE IN THE SAME PLACE ...BUT ARE APART.

W'KABI LOOKS AT HIS SON KONO AND TRIES TO HOLD BACK HIS HURT. SUCH EMOTION IS NOT SUITABLE FOR ONE WHO IS HEAD OF COURT SECURITY. KONO RETURNS HIS LOOK, AND THE MISERY ENGULFS THEM BOTH...AS IF EACH WERE HOPING THE OTHER COULD SAVE THEM.

TAKU WOULD KNOW MORE OF THIS KIND OF THING THAN I. IT IS...DIFFICULT ..TO LOSE HER CARING.

ONCE YOUR MOTHER AND I WERE CLOSE. I THINK THAT IS DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO IMAGINE

WHEN WE FIRST MET, MY SON, WE WERE DIFFERENT PEOPLE. WE DID NOT HURL ACCUSATIONS AT EACH OTHER.

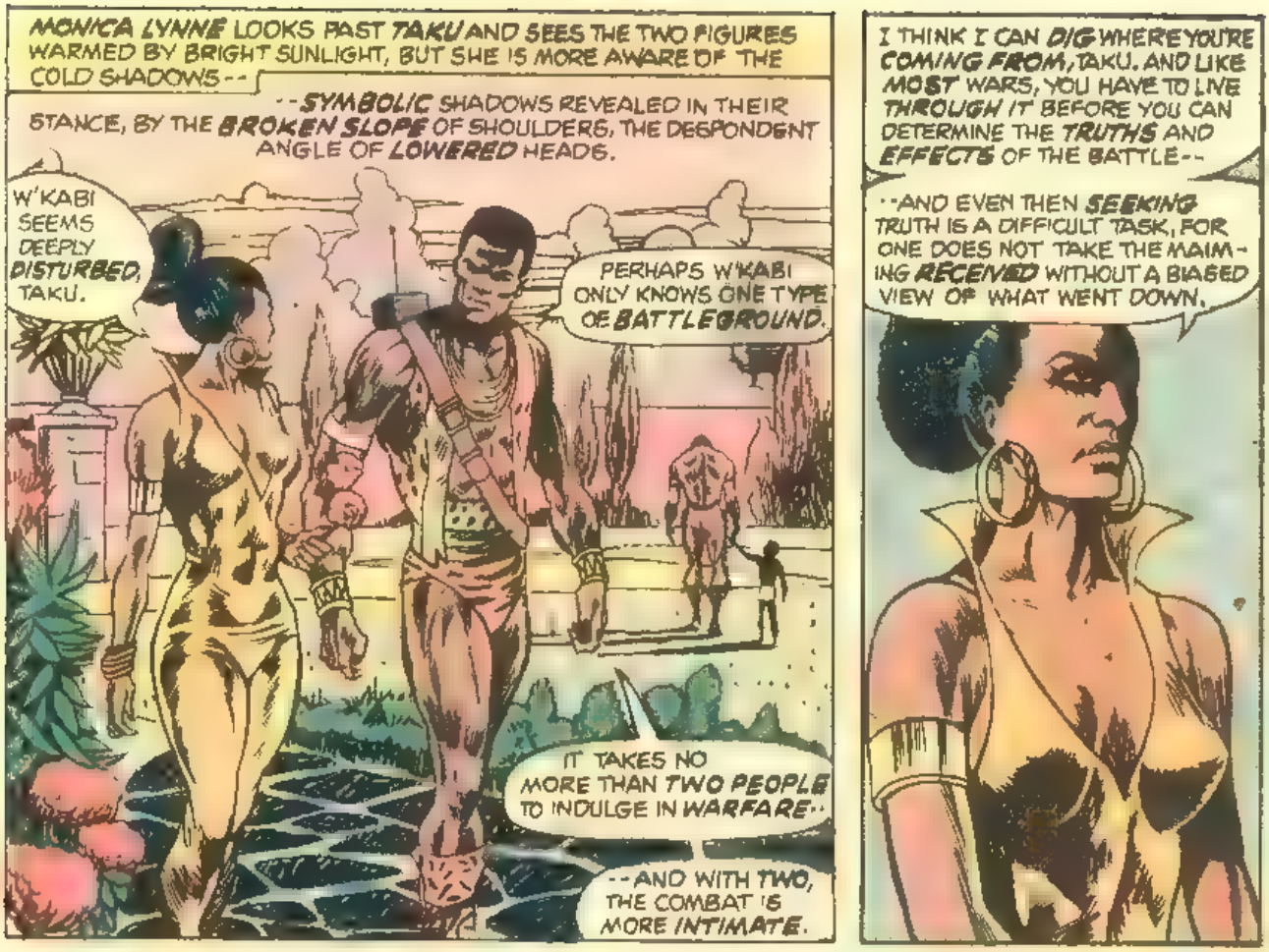
I FEEL HURT AND ANGER, MY SON, AND THEY MAKE ME DO THINGS THAT FORCE US FARTHER APART.

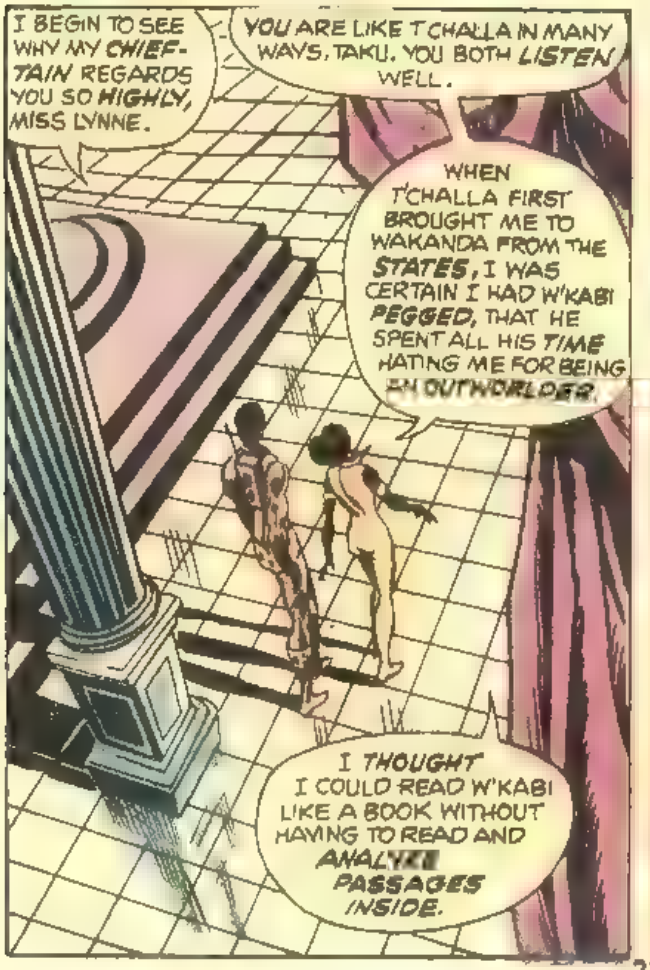
BUT WHAT WORDS DO YOU SAY ..ARE THERE ANY WORDS TO SAY, TO SOMEONE YOU ONCE KNEW--

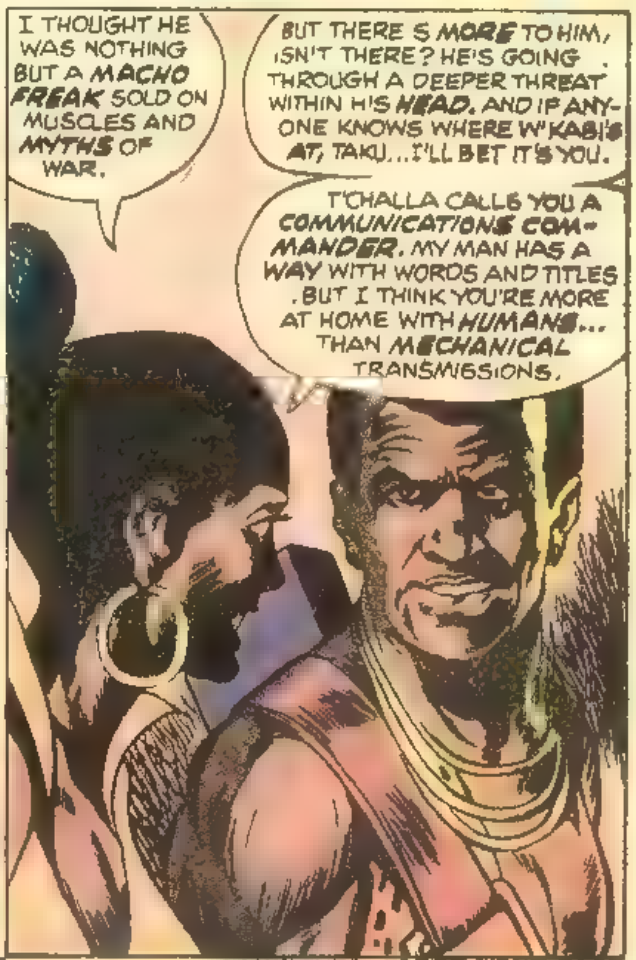
--WHO YOU CAN NO LONGER FREELY TOUCH--

--WHOSE WARMTH YOU HAVE LOST. DO YOU UNDERSTAND, MY SON?

I AM LOST!


MONICA LYNNE LOOKS PAST TAKU AND SEES THE TWO FIGURES WARMED BY BRIGHT SUNLIGHT, BUT SHE IS MORE AWARE OF THE COLD SHADOWS--
--SYMBOLIC SHADOWS REVEALED IN THEIR STANCE, BY THE BROKEN SLOPE OF SHOULDERS, THE DESPONDENT ANGLE OF LOWERED HEADS.
W'KABI SEEMS DEEPLY DISTURBED, TAKU.
PERHAPS W'KABI ONLY KNOWS ONE TYPE OF BATTLEGROUND.
IT TAKES NO MORE THAN TWO PEOPLE TO INDULGE IN WARFARE--
--AND WITH TWO, THE COMBAT IS MORE INTIMATE.
I THINK I CAN DIG WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, TAKU. AND LIKE MOST WARS, YOU HAVE TO LIVE THROUGH IT BEFORE YOU CAN DETERMINE THE TRUTHS AND EFFECTS OF THE BATTLE--
--AND EVEN THEN SEEKING TRUTH IS A DIFFICULT TASK, FOR ONE DOES NOT TAKE THE MAIMING RECEIVED WITHOUT A BIASED VIEW OF WHAT WENT DOWN.


I BEGIN TO SEE WHY MY CHIEFTAIN REGARDS YOU SO HIGHLY, MISS LYNNE.
YOU ARE LIKE T'CHALLA IN MANY WAYS, TAKU. YOU BOTH LISTEN WELL.
WHEN T'CHALLA FIRST BROUGHT ME TO WAKANDA FROM THE STATES, I WAS CERTAIN I HAD W'KABI PEGGED, THAT HE SPENT ALL HIS TIME HATING ME FOR BEING AN OUTWORLDER.
I THOUGHT I COULD READ W'KABI LIKE A BOOK WITHOUT HAVING TO READ AND ANALYZE PASSAGES INSIDE.


I THOUGHT HE WAS NOTHING BUT A MACHO FREAK SOLD ON MUSCLES AND MYTHS OF WAR.
BUT THERE'S MORE TO HIM, ISN'T THERE? HE'S GOING THROUGH A DEEPER THREAT WITHIN HIS HEAD. AND IF ANYONE KNOWS WHERE W'KABI'S AT, TAKU...I'LL BET IT'S YOU.
T'CHALLA CALLS YOU A COMMUNICATIONS COMMANDER. MY MAN HAS A WAY WITH WORDS AND TITLES. BUT I THINK YOU'RE MORE AT HOME WITH HUMANS... THAN MECHANICAL TRANSMISSIONS.



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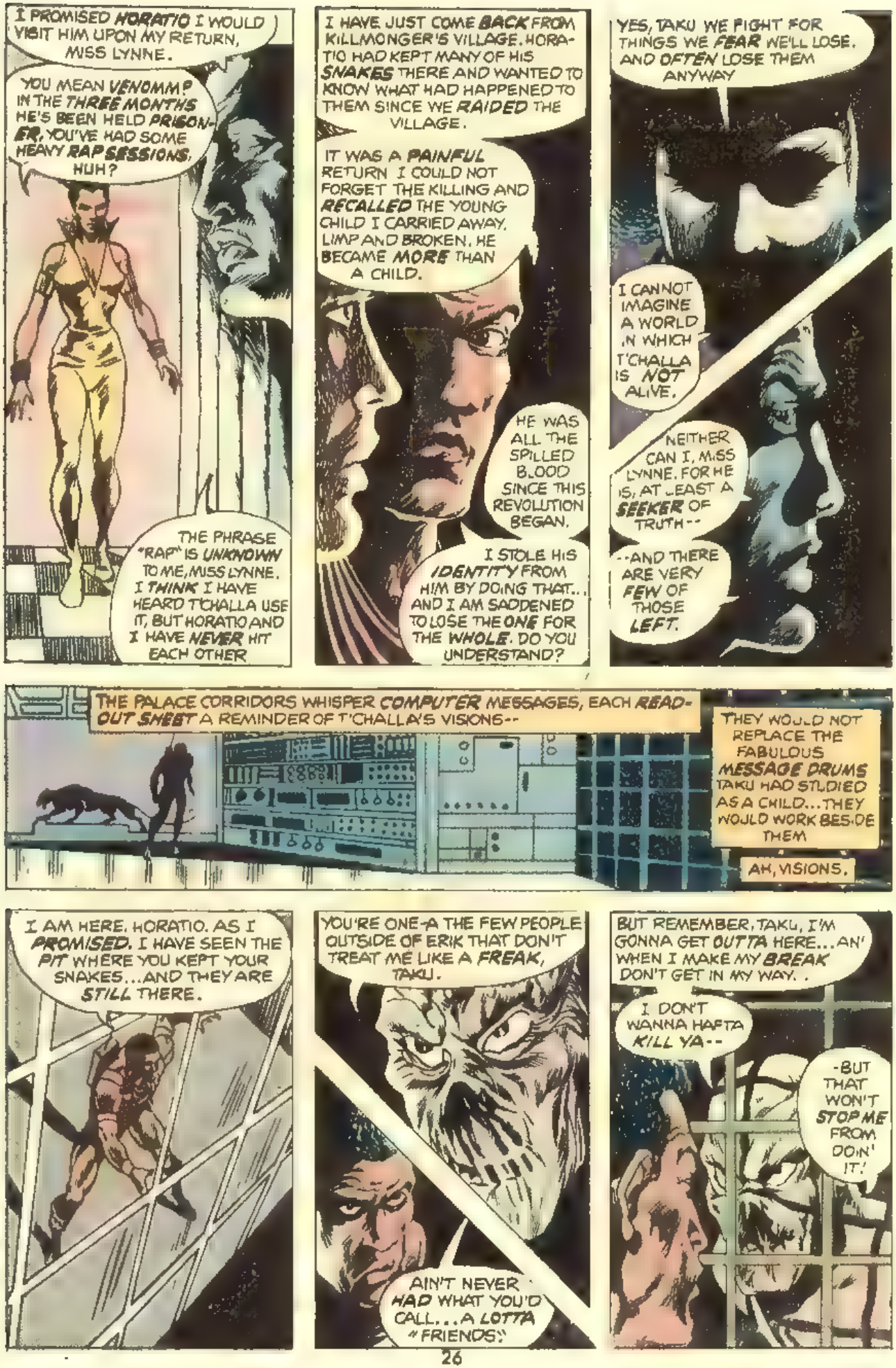
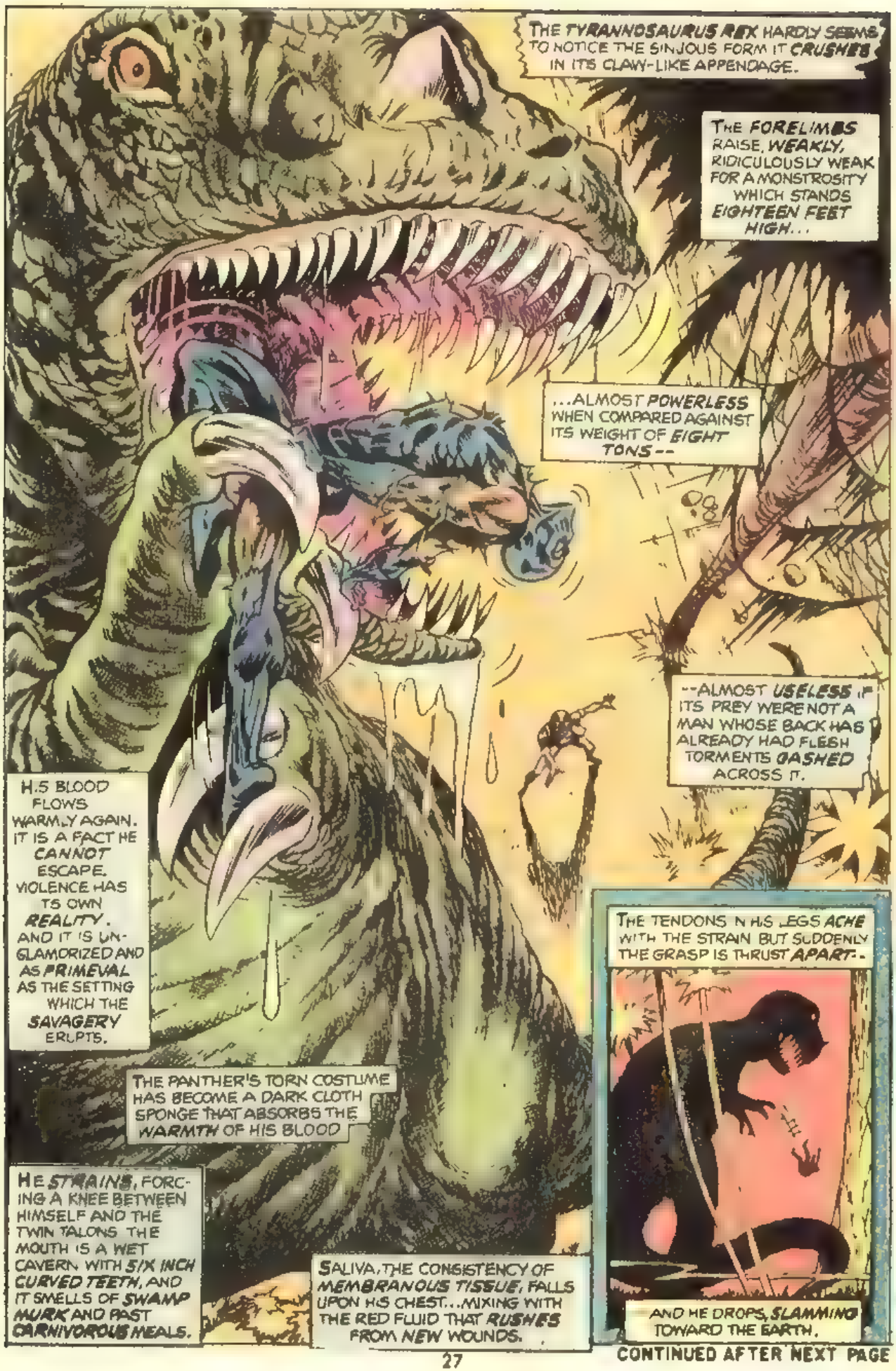

I PROMISED HORATIO I WOULD VISIT HIM UPON MY RETURN, MISS LYNNE.
YOU MEAN VENOMM? IN THE THREE MONTHS HE'S BEEN HELD PRISONER, YOU'VE HAD SOME HEAVY RAP SESSIONS, HUH?
THE PHRASE "RAP" IS UNKNOWN TO ME, MISS LYNNE. I THINK I HAVE HEARD T'CHALLA USE IT, BUT HORATIO AND I HAVE NEVER HIT EACH OTHER
I HAVE JUST COME BACK FROM KILLMONGER'S VILLAGE. HORATIO HAD KEPT MANY OF HIS SNAKES THERE AND WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEM SINCE WE RAIDED THE VILLAGE.
IT WAS A PAINFUL RETURN. I COULD NOT FORGET THE KILLING AND RECALLED THE YOUNG CHILD I CARRIED AWAY, LIMP AND BROKEN. HE BECAME MORE THAN A CHILD.
HE WAS ALL THE SPILLED BLOOD SINCE THIS REVOLUTION BEGAN.
I STOLE HIS IDENTITY FROM HIM BY DOING THAT... AND I AM SADDENED TO LOSE THE ONE FOR THE WHOLE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES, TAKU WE FIGHT FOR THINGS WE FEAR WE'LL LOSE. AND OFTEN LOSE THEM ANYWAY
I CANNOT IMAGINE A WORLD IN WHICH T'CHALLA IS NOT ALIVE.
NEITHER CAN I, MISS LYNNE. FOR HE IS, AT LEAST A SEEKER OF TRUTH--
--AND THERE ARE VERY FEW OF THOSE LEFT.
THE PALACE CORRIDORS WHISPER COMPUTER MESSAGES, EACH READ-OUT SHEET A REMINDER OF T'CHALLA'S VISIONS--
THEY WOULD NOT REPLACE THE FABULOUS MESSAGE DRUMS TAKU HAD STUDIED AS A CHILD... THEY WOULD WORK BESIDE THEM
AH, VISIONS.
I AM HERE, HORATIO. AS I PROMISED. I HAVE SEEN THE PIT WHERE YOU KEPT YOUR SNAKES... AND THEY ARE STILL THERE.
YOU'RE ONE-A THE FEW PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF ERIK THAT DON'T TREAT ME LIKE A FREAK, TAKU.
AIN'T NEVER HAD WHAT YOU'D CALL... A LOTTA FRIENDS!
BUT REMEMBER, TAKU, I'M GONNA GET OUTTA HERE... AN' WHEN I MAKE MY BREAK DON'T GET IN MY WAY. .
I DON'T WANNA HAFTA KILL YA--
-BUT THAT WON'T STOP ME FROM DOIN' IT!


THE TYRANNOSAURUS REX HARDLY SEEMS TO NOTICE THE SINJOUS FORM IT CRUSHES IN ITS CLAW-LIKE APPENDAGE.
THE FORELIMBS RAISE, WEAKLY, RIDICULOUSLY WEAK FOR A MONSTROSITY WHICH STANDS EIGHTEEN FEET HIGH...
...ALMOST POWERLESS WHEN COMPARED AGAINST ITS WEIGHT OF EIGHT TONS--
--ALMOST USELESS IF ITS PREY WERE NOT A MAN WHOSE BACK HAS ALREADY HAD FLESH TORMENTS GASHED ACROSS IT.
HIS BLOOD FLOWS WARMLY AGAIN. IT IS A FACT HE CANNOT ESCAPE. VIOLENCE HAS ITS OWN REALITY. AND IT IS UN-GLAMORIZED AND AS PRIMEVAL AS THE SETTING WHICH THE SAVAGERY ERUPTS.
THE PANTHER'S TORN COSTUME HAS BECOME A DARK CLOTH SPONGE THAT ABSORBS THE WARMTH OF HIS BLOOD
HE STRAINS, FORC-ING A KNEE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE TWIN TALONS THE MOUTH IS A WET CAVERN WITH 5/X INCH CURVED TEETH, AND IT SMELLS OF SWAMP MURK AND PAST CARNIVOROUS MEALS.
SALIVA, THE CONSISTENCY OF MEMBRANOUS TISSUE, FALLS UPON HIS CHEST...MIXING WITH THE RED FLUID THAT RUSHES FROM NEW WOUNDS.
THE TENDONS IN HIS LEGS ACHE WITH THE STRAIN BUT SUDDENLY THE GRASP IS THRUST APART--
AND HE DROPS, SLAMMING TOWARD THE EARTH.



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# MEMOS AND MEANDERINGS FROM YOUR MIGHTY MUDDLED MERRY-MAKERS!

## STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

**Holiday Greetings, right from the heart**
**To our wondrous scripters**
**Who make writing an art,**
**To our painstaking pencillers**
**Breathing life to each tale**
**And our illustrious inkers**
**Be they female or male.**
**To our editors, letterers,**
**Production folk too,**
**Colorists, proof-readers,**
**Both the old and the new.**
**But heading the list**
**Is our top superhero—**
**So, greetings to YOU, chum**
**Without you— we're zero!**

Greetings as well to the fabulous folks at Children's Television Workshop who've helped us make comic-book history with the widely-acclaimed SPIDEY SUPER STORIES— and to the great guys and gals at Simon & Shuster who've made national best-sellers of our crazy and colorful MARVEL CALENDAR, as well as our sell-out sensation, the ORIGINS OF MARVEL COMICS! And, the Season's Best from all of us here in the Bullpen to our talented engravers, printers, distributors, and licensees— to all the True Believers everywhere who've truly made The Marvel Age of Comics an era of fun, and fantasy, and fellowship that will long outlast these fleeting words!

Excelsior!

Stan

Oops! Hold it! This is still starry-eyed Stan yakkin' on. I almost forgot to bring you up to date on the new, cataclysmic changes in our editorial line-up. Effective immediately, I'm proud to announce the appointment of Lively Len Wein as Executive Editor of mighty Marvel's greater-than-ever group of color comics! While with equal pride, I hereby acclaim Marvelous Marv Wolfman as Executive Editor of Marvel's sensational series of black-and-white story-panel magazines! And, even before our heads can stop reeling from this cataclysmic communique, let me add that Len and Marv will be assiduously assisted by their newly-appointed managing editors, Marvel's own Cheerful Chris Claremont and Dauntless Don McGregor! As for Roy "The Boy" Thomas, (remember when I first called you that, R.T.? Was it seven or eight years ago?), the Rascally One is now basking in the title of Editor Emeritus as he returns to his first love, scripting, wherein he plans to produce more majestic masterworks than ever for Marveldom Assembled! And now, take it away, Lively Len, and the rest of the batty Bullpen —

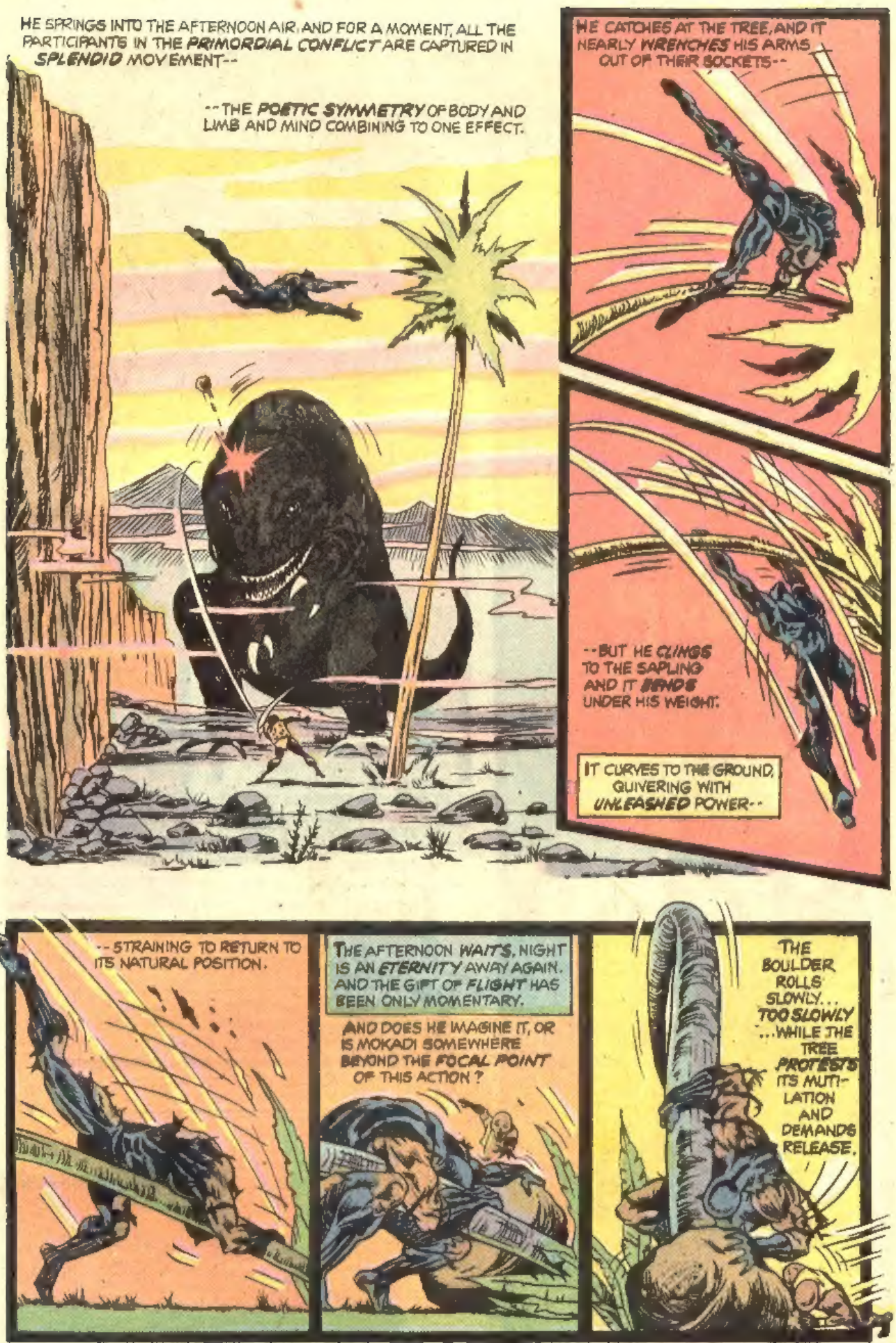
**ITEM!** As if Smilin' Stan's loquacious comments above haven't confused you enough already, let us be the first to add that Len and Chris and Marv and Don will be bravely backed up by yet another two stalwarts; Sparkling SCOTT EDELMAN, former Associate Editor on our ever-burgeoning line of block-bustin' British weeklies, has shambled several doors over to become the latest— easily the LARGEST—Assistant Editor our cavortin' color comics line has ever seen, while DAVE (The Dude) KRAFT has assumed the title, not to mention the diligent duties, of Articles Editor for our bombastic black-and-white magazines. Welcome aboard the mighty Marvel ark, illustrious ones— and know ye that your efforts on behalf of Marveldom Assembled shall be applauded by all. (Now if we could only figure out some way to PAY you guys something every once in a while...)

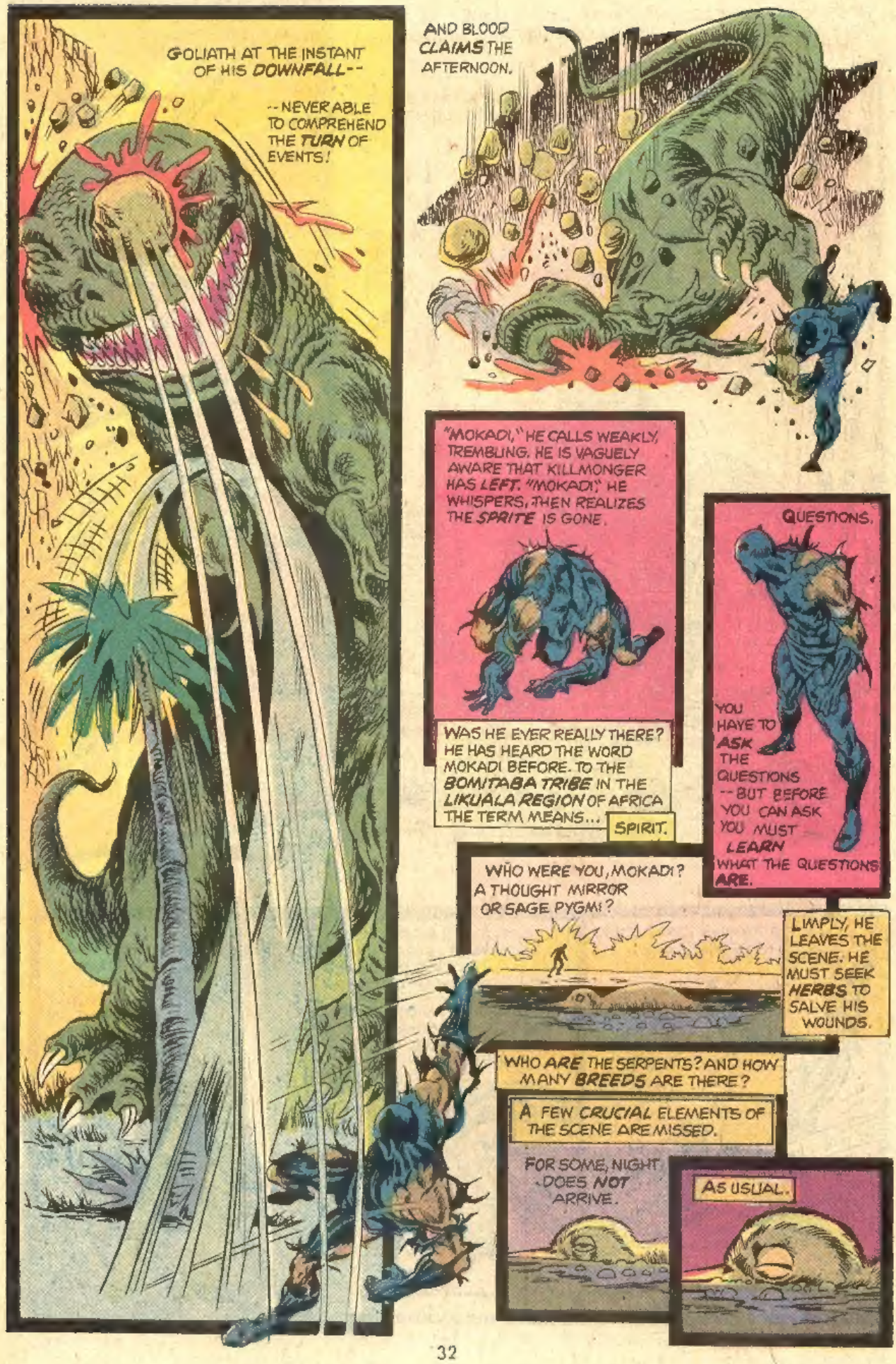
**ITEM!** If you think you need a scorecard to keep track of your batty Bullpen's moves around the office, you need a whole blamed *computer* to keep tabs on their various movings about in the wondrous world outside during the past few months. To wit: the aforementioned Dauntless DON McGREGOR packed up his stunning wife SANDY, their durable daughter LAUREN, not to mention the world's largest collection of Robert Culp publicity stills, and trucked from the wilds of the Bronx into the heart of darkest Queens (just a very few blocks away from a certain malevolent couple named WOLFMAN, and a gentleman dude called KRAFT). Meanwhile, STEVE (Baby) GERBER carried himself and his belongings from the mythical borough of Brooklyn right into shadow-strewn mid-town Manhattan (brave man, that GERBER), while still finding time to turn out a frankly-informative article on comics as a visual story-telling medium for the film-focused magazine SUPER-8 FILMMAKER. Back on the moving scene, Dynamic DAVE COCKRUM and family moved *across* over-crowded Queens; Iridescent IRENE VARTANOFF trekked across beleaguered Brooklyn; and in what must rank as one of the shortest moves on record, Merry GERRY and Cavortin' CARLA CONWAY (the hottest new writing team since Astaire and Rogers—that's Ginger, not Steve) shlepped their twin typewriters and their pandemonious paperback collection a whole *ten blocks* from their former digs. Let's hear it for braving new frontiers, folks. If we had room, we might also be tempted to mention that RICH (Swash) BUCKLER gathered wife, son, and drawing board, and journeyed back to his native Detroit, while Dapper DAN ADKINS pulled up stakes and fled East Liverpool, Ohio for the fresh air and cactus of Arizona. But we don't have room, so we won't.

**ITEM!** Looks like it's cataclysmic clarification time again, Pilgrims. Seems your beleaguered Bullpen has been bombarded lately by letters wondering *why* one or two of our mildly magnificent color mags haven't carried the mighty MARVEL VALUE STAMPS we've been telling you so much about, so now's as good a time as any to set the record straight. If you're eagerly looking for our vital VALUE STAMPS each and every month (and if you're not, you don't know the adventure you're missing), you'll find 'em on the liltin' *letters pages* of any and all of our mags that *have* letters pages. The reasons behind excluding the MVS's from non-letters paged mags is far too complicated to go into here, but trust us when we say it's a condition we just can't avoid right now. In the meantime, keep your eagle eyes peeled for the startling *second series* of VALUE STAMPS coming to you soon. Believe us, if ya thought the first series was enough to knock you out of your proverbial tree, the *second* set'll floor you.

THE MIGHTY MARVEL COMICON!
FOUR WORDS THAT SPELL A WORLD OF EXCITEMENT!
IN PERSON! YOUR FAVORITE MARVEL HEROES!
IN PERSON! STAN (THE MAN) LEE HIMSELF!
IN PERSON! THE WHOLE BLAMED BATTY BULLPEN!
THE DATE TO REMEMBER
MARCH 21-24, '75
FOR MORE INFORMATION, WRITE:
MIGHTY MARVEL COMICON
c/o PHIL SEULING
BOX 177, CONEY ISLAND STATION
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11224

IN MID-FLIGHT, HE EXECUTES A SUPERB SOMERSAULT--
--HITTING THE EARTH WITH AN IMPACT THAT DRIVES THE AIR OUT OF HIS LUNGS PAST SNARLING LIPS.
HIS EYES BLUR!
THE BLUR FOCUSES, AND THE BEAST IS THERE BEFORE HIM--
--AND THIS TIME IT IS AWARE OF THE TINY BLUE SPECK--
--AS IF ITS EYES HAVE ACTUALLY BECOME TRANSFIXED BY ITS MINISCULE MOVEMENTS.
HE CLAWS DESPERATELY AT THE CLIFFSIDE, TEARING HIS WOUNDS OPEN WIDER, THE BLOOD COLLECTING AT THE SMALL OF HIS BACK.
HE LOOKS PAST THE RAVENOUS MOUTH FOR SOME SIGHT OF MOKADI.
GONE.
VANISHED? AS ABRUPTLY AS HE APPEARED.
OR IS HE TRAPPED BELOW, MANGLED FLESH LEFT IN THE CREATURE'S WAKE? AND WHY DOES THE NAME MOKADI FLIRT TANTALYZINGLY AT HIS SUBCONSCIOUS, AS IF HE HAS PAST KNOWLEDGE OF ITS NAME?
RAGGED YET ELEGANT--
--TORN BUT UNIFIED--
--CLOUD AND SKY AS DISTANT WITNESSES!


HE SPRINGS INTO THE AFTERNOON AIR, AND FOR A MOMENT, ALL THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE PRIMORDIAL CONFLICT ARE CAPTURED IN SPLENDID MOVEMENT--
--THE POETIC SYMMETRY OF BODY AND LIMB AND MIND COMBINING TO ONE EFFECT.
HE CATCHES AT THE TREE, AND IT NEARLY WRENCHES HIS ARMS OUT OF THEIR SOCKETS--
--BUT HE CLINGS TO THE SAPLING AND IT BENDS UNDER HIS WEIGHT.
IT CURVES TO THE GROUND, QUIVERING WITH UNLEASHED POWER--
--STRAINING TO RETURN TO ITS NATURAL POSITION.
THE AFTERNOON WAITS, NIGHT IS AN ETERNITY AWAY AGAIN. AND THE GIFT OF FLIGHT HAS BEEN ONLY MOMENTARY.
AND DOES HE IMAGINE IT, OR IS MOKADI SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE FOCAL POINT OF THIS ACTION?
THE BOULDER ROLLS SLOWLY... TOO SLOWLY ...WHILE THE TREE PROTESTS ITS MUTILATION AND DEMANDS RELEASE.


GOLIATH AT THE INSTANT OF HIS DOWNFALL--
--NEVER ABLE TO COMPREHEND THE TURN OF EVENTS!
AND BLOOD CLAIMS THE AFTERNOON.
"MOKADI," HE CALLS WEAKLY, TREMBLING. HE IS VAGUELY AWARE THAT KILLMONGER HAS LEFT. "MOKADI," HE WHISPERS, THEN REALIZES THE SPRITE IS GONE.
WAS HE EVER REALLY THERE? HE HAS HEARD THE WORD MOKADI BEFORE. TO THE BOMITABA TRIBE IN THE LIKUALA REGION OF AFRICA THE TERM MEANS... SPIRIT.
QUESTIONS.
YOU HAVE TO ASK THE QUESTIONS --BUT BEFORE YOU CAN ASK YOU MUST LEARN WHAT THE QUESTIONS ARE.
WHO WERE YOU, MOKADI? A THOUGHT MIRROR OR SAGE PYGMI?
LIMPLY, HE LEAVES THE SCENE. HE MUST SEEK HERBS TO SALVE HIS WOUNDS.
WHO ARE THE SERPENTS? AND HOW MANY BREEDS ARE THERE?
A FEW CRUCIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SCENE ARE MISSED.
FOR SOME, NIGHT DOES NOT ARRIVE.
AS USUAL.